



April 24, 2017 | 9:00 – 11:30 am

10 Park Plaza, Boston | **MAPC Conference Room, 3rd Floor, 60 Temple Place, Boston MA**

Meeting Summary

Discussion

Pat Field (CBI) opened the meeting at 9 AM and reviewed the agenda. Mr. Field reviewed the model runs that have already been run and analyzed (0, 1, and 2). He clarified to the group that if the eight proposed models are run, two subsequent runs would remain.

Alternatives 3 and 4:

Scott Peterson (CTPS) presented results of Alternatives 3 and 4. Alternative 3 included bus improvements, bike/pedestrian improvements, constrained residential auto availability and increased commercial parking costs for certain TAZs in the study area, and Transportation Demand Management, including work-at-home policies. Alternative 4 included the same components as Alternative 3, but provided sensitivity testing of residential auto availability and commercial parking cost increases. Alternatives 3 and 4 were analyzed against both the surface street (No-Build) and underpass (Alternative 2) options for Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue.

Analysis of Alternatives 3/4 showed a significant mode share change as SOV trips changed to transit trips. However, the reduction in certain SOV trips created capacity that activated latent demand in the surrounding area, causing “new” traffic to backfill the capacity that the transit and TDM policies provided. Therefore, some modest improvements to traffic were shown in the periphery of the study area. The underpass option for Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue analyzed with Alternatives 3/4 maintained the improved speeds over the surface option.

Fred Salvucci (Somerville) commented that some benefits of the components of Alternatives 3/4—including the way in which complete streets policies would reduce congestion for buses—would not be shown until a physical design phase.

The improved headways and route extensions for some buses resulted in a tripling of revenue miles in the corridor. Routes that saw the most increases in ridership included Everett to Boston routes, CT4, and Route 110. Several new routes had more demand than capacity.

The Orange Line experienced a 10% increase in boardings, explained by increased connectivity. The Sullivan Square stop had a 50% increase in boardings.

The Complete Streets policies in the study area included a traffic calming effect to promote pedestrian and bike activity, so a 5 mph speed reduction was applied universally. This also pushed more use of transit in the model. Non-motorized mode shares improved 1-2%, including

significant increases in walking trips to transit. Mr. Salvucci suggested that future complete street policies could allow more differentiation to encourage some streets to be more bike thoroughfares and others to be more transit-oriented.

Isolating the impacts of the residential auto availability restrictions and the commercial parking price increases showed that 60% of over all package mode share change was achieved without imposing auto availability constraints. Whereas the commercial parking price increases didn't show over all changes to trip-making, the residential auto availability constraints created almost 50,000 more, shorter, non-motorized trips in peak periods. The constraint also led to more off-peak trips. The analysis also found that some off-peak trips in the context of restricted residential auto availability were "unable" to reach their destination, which in practical terms would mean that rideshare trips (e.g. Uber, Lyft, etc.) would be used, thus introducing new trips.

Brad Rawson (Somerville) commented that the analysis underscored how consequential development decisions were and emphasized the need for integrated neighborhoods to make meaningful trips available.

Jay Monty (Everett) commented that the extent of the transit infrastructure development implied in these alternatives would be costly, despite initial intentions for these alternatives to be "light" on infrastructure costs.

Michael Glavin (Somerville) commented that the urban ring system takes a lot of pressure off of the current hub and spoke system. He said that Somerville aimed to reduce commuter parking while shouldering an appropriate commuter burden. He also commented that Somerville had heard substantial air quality concerns and encouraged solutions that addressed air quality issues.

Jim Gillooly (Boston) asked for an update on cost estimations for the alternatives, and also suggested that one outcome of this study could be acknowledgement that tackling the problems that are the focus of this study requires looking beyond the constraints of the study area.

Marc Draisen (MAPC) commented on the need to be able to determine the various kinds of benefits (including air quality, for example) that people inside and outside study area might experience, acknowledging the issue of back-fill of traffic relief in the study area. Mr. Peterson commented that if the auto constraints (via parking cost and auto availability) were extended to a larger area, more benefits could be seen, but those would also require more transit services to accommodate the reduction in SOV trips.

Alternatives 5 and 6:

Mark Abbott reviewed the proposed inputs for model runs of Alternatives 5 and 6. Mr. Gillooly confirmed that after the City of Boston's meeting with the public on May 18 regarding its Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue study, Boston would be ready to give its opinion whether the Sullivan Square/Rutherford Avenue surface or underpass option should be carried through in modeling of future alternatives.

Mr. Salvucci encouraged consideration of modeling as part of Alternative 5 the conversion of the HOV lane on I-93 to a hot-lane rather than to a general purpose lane, because it would preserve some of the improved headway times for buses that use that lane while still opening it up to some general traffic.

The group agreed to the proposed inputs for Alternative 5, “Ramps and Lanes,” and staff said they would update the group if any options besides modeling the conversion of the HOV lane to general purpose would be possible.

For Alternative 6, “Buses and Trains”, the group discussed the pending question of whether a right-of-way behind the Wynn Casino would be possible to allow BRT to avoid congestion on Broadway for some distance. Staff agreed to confer again with Railroad Operations and other parties to see whether this option might be workable. Staff agreed to convene an off-line meeting with interested parties if that option was possible to discuss it.

The group confirmed the inputs for Alternatives 5 and 6, pending any updates regarding the HOV Lane or right-of-way options for BRT in Everett.

Next steps:

Staff reviewed that the next steps to approve Alternative 7 and 8 inputs would take place at the June 5 Working Group meeting.

Wynn Casino construction update:

Jacqui Krum (Wynn Boston Harbor) gave the Working Group an update on the Casino site construction.¹ Ms. Krum described construction progressing in several areas, including site excavation, plans to make way for water transportation, local roadway broadening, and addition of pedestrian and bike facilities on some local roads.

Richard Johnston (Attorney General’s Office) asked Ms. Krum about Wynn’s purchase of land across Broadway from the Casino. Ms. Krum explained that the purchases were generally to help clean up the front view from the Casino towards Broadway and potentially to open up for development in the future.

Mr. Salvucci asked for clarification regarding the water shuttles that Wynn was planning for in cooperation with Boston Harbor Cruises. Ms. Krum explained that the Wynn shuttles would not trigger opening of the bridge, and that they would require 9 feet of clearance.

Mr. Rawson emphasized the need to be sure that the Working Group’s contemplated models are realistically meshing with Wynn’s designs.

Mr. Field adjourned the meeting at 11:30 after reviewing the decisions made and the next steps for the June 5 meeting.

¹ See the slides from the Wynn presentation for details of the updates Ms. Krum provided.